



WISCONSIN
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
PARKWAY COMMISSION



August 8, 2005

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
51 East Fourth Street
Winona, Wisconsin 55987

Subject: Review Comments
Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WIMRPC) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). The WIMRPC is a long standing legislatively established 12- member commission along with ex officio membership of the state departments of Natural Resources, Tourism, Transportation, Commerce and State Historical Society whose purpose is fostering the planning, development and preservation of the Wisconsin Great River Road National Scenic Byway (WIGRRNSB) and its embellishments. Furthermore the WIMRPC is the designated Byway Organization for this Scenic Byway as provided by the Department of Transportation's National Scenic Byway Program. The Upper Mississippi River Refuge is a significant attribute to the vision and goals of the WIMRPC and the WIGRRNSB – conversely the WIGRR/NSB provides the primary land access (along with scenic overlooks, vista areas, waysides, selective scenic easements, biking accommodations, etc) to the adjacent Refuge as it traverses the Mississippi River Valley corridor as acknowledged in Section 3.3.8 and Figure 33.

We are delighted that the Goals and Objectives of the CCP and Strategies listed under preferred Alternative D and quantified in the various Tables advocate initiatives for expanding and/or enhancing the following priority public uses and related elements: wildlife observation and photography; interpretation and environmental education; recreational boating, camping and other beach – related uses; public information that fosters awareness, understanding and appreciation via kiosks, trails, observation sites and public access. All of these elements are consistent with the vision and goals of the WIMRPC for the WIGRR/NSB corridor and its stated six intrinsic qualities e.g. scenic, archeological, historical, cultural, natural and recreational.

It is appropriate that the draft document makes mention of the need to foster public awareness and appreciation of the Bluffs and the Natural and Special Designation areas – key elements that make the magnificent/scenic Mississippi River Valley Corridor a very special place in mid America.

The WIMRPC cherishes the partnership relationship that has emerged with your agency through staff at your Winona Office. We trust you share our desire to even a strengthened partnership as we mutually proceed with the arduous tasks of implementing the common elements of our vision and goals for that “very special place in mid America”.

Sincerely;

Alan Lorenz, Chairman
Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission
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